



The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 25 November 1968



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
25 NOVEMBER 1968

LATE ITEM

France

The few foreign exchange markets heard from so far this morning report trading is light. Both the franc and sterling were up slightly in the West German market.

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1. South Vietnam

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Thieu had some statesmanlike things to say about South Vietnam's negotiating position.

--"The United States, large and powerful as it is, cannot fight on without the support of its people; therefore, if the war drags on without an end in sight and we do not contribute effectively to its conclusion, we cannot expect unending American support."

--"Reality forces us to recognize that (the Hanoi leaders) are in fact the government of North Vietnam; therefore, we must negotiate with them." But, "we cannot allow ourselves to recognize the National Liberation Front."

--"The present situation forces us to strive for a limited objective.... Our 'limited objectives' are that the North Vietnamese cease their aggression. We want a peace designed to last, with effective international control against reaggression."

Thieu never said explicitly that the government would not negotiate with the Front, but he repeatedly and firmly ruled out any postwar coalition with it.

2. France

The measures announced by De Gaulle last night are likely to aggravate domestic problems and, in particular, lead to new worker-student discontent. Labor spokesmen already are complaining that workers will have to bear the brunt of austerity. If budget cuts deprive students of the new universities and facilities promised them, then trouble in that quarter is a good possibility.

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3. Balkans

The political and military situation remains quiet. [redacted]
[redacted] report no evidence of unusual military moves in Hungary and Bulgaria; [redacted]
[redacted] no unusual activity in areas next to Rumania.

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Yesterday a confused British correspondent triggered concern with a London Observer story stating Yugoslav troops had gone on emergency alert because of an impending showdown with the Russians. Yugoslav troops are not on alert. The correspondent apparently was mixed up over public discussion of a proposed national defense law.

4. Czechoslovakia

Cracks are beginning to show in party unity and the population is becoming more alienated as the struggle about Czechoslovakia's future course continues. Over the weekend, party leaders fanned out around the country to explain unpopular decisions made at the recent central committee plenum. They were far from speaking with one voice, and their comments reflected the bitterness at the top where, as Slovak party chief Husak put it, divisions are "deep and dangerous."

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5. Mali

The new military junta is moving Mali away from the radical leftist policies of ousted President Keita and into the ranks of moderate African states.

In his first important policy statement since taking power, junta leader Traore reversed Keita's socialist commitment by pledging to keep private enterprise and appealing for private foreign investment. Traore, who has installed a provisional government in which moderate civilians predominate, will be looking to the West in general and France in particular for help.

6. West Berlin

Tear gas and truncheons may be called into play today if radical students use the court appearance of one of their leaders as a pretext for violence. The students seem to be looking for trouble and the police are in a mood to oblige.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

- 1.) Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
- 2.) North Vietnamese Reflections of U S
Political Attitudes



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Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
for the President's Eyes Only

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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

Le Duc Tho's Return: The tough statement Le Duc Tho made at the Paris airport Saturday seems intended to raise the propaganda pressure on the US for forward movement in the Paris talks. As he stepped off the plane after some six weeks of consultations in Hanoi, Peking, and Moscow, Tho demanded the immediate opening of a "four-party conference" and refused to consider the next round of talks as a "two-sided affair." Other Hanoi spokesmen have pressed hard on this issue in the last few days, and though the calls for immediate talks were not accompanied by any dire threats, their reiteration has added to the noise level.

Tho's "summons" to the US was accompanied by the boast that if the US does not comply with the "legitimate demands of the Vietnamese people," these demands will be won on the battlefield.

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Hanoi Propaganda Efforts in West Europe: Hanoi's propagandists continue to fan out over Western Europe. [redacted] reports a scheduled visit of a North Vietnamese Red Cross delegation to West Germany within the next few weeks. Some of Hanoi's propaganda people in Paris have also invited West German organizations connected with the world peace movement to come to France to meet with them.

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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL
ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

US Youth Activities: Hanoi Radio on its international service continues to play up domestic US opposition to the war. In an English language broadcast on 23 November, Hanoi pointed to a 16 November

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statement by folk singer Joan Baez urging American youth to resist the draft. The same broadcast cited a denunciation of US draft laws by a 16 November meeting of Catholic bishops in Washington, and student protests at Notre Dame University aimed at CIA and Dow Chemical "recruiting" activities.

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